

Newest Marvels of Zoo Surgery

How the Increased Value of Caged Beasts Is Developing a New Veterinarian School Where All the Various Kinds of Animal Ailments, from Ten-Foot Colds up to Crocodile Tooth-Aches, Are Constantly Being Treated.



Curing a Ten-Foot "Cold in the Trunk" by Coaxing the Elephant to Inhale Hot Vinegar Fumes Through a Canvas Funnel.

A LION who could drag an ox by his teeth for miles was snared in Africa recently, brought to the United States and placed in a mid-western zoological garden. A stick of candy got into his cage and the next day he was down with a thumping toothache. It took his keepers a week to find out what the trouble was and three dentists were necessary to restore the once so stalwart Felix Leo to his usual state of mind and appearance.

Leo's case was typical. The habitants of the forest, plain and rocky cave no sooner reach civilization via the hunters' net than they begin to develop many of the ailments of the genus homo and meet with accidents that they somehow seemed to avoid when they were dependent solely on their own resources. As a result zoo animal surgery has become a highly developed science and no first-class traveling circus, park menagerie or zoological garden now tries to operate without an attending physician.

The increasing rarity and value of wild animals has of course brought them more careful medical attention and many veterinarians, such as Dr. Bruce Blair of the New York Zoological Park, have carried the study of wild animal organisms to a high state of specialization.

How the Dumb Are Doctored

A few years ago many animals would die from causes that the zoological authorities could not determine. In most cases this was attributed to the animal's inability to adjust himself to the conditions of his confinement. Later when these deaths were more closely investigated by scientific methods, disorders were found which were of a minor nature in their incipency and which could have been checked by prompt and experienced attention.

But even with the present modern methods being practised animal surgeons often meet with great difficulty in handling their patients. The animal practitioner knows that the average beast will resist treatment and usually has to be rendered hors de combat before anything satisfactory can be done, as is the case with the lion shown in the illustration.

The operation necessary here is the extraction of what is known as the "dew claw." This is an appendage to the animal's paw—a sort of fifth finger—which, however necessary it may be when he is bounding through the African brush, is a nuisance when he gets to civilization. He tears it against all sorts of obstructions. It gets in his way all of the time. It is therefore taken out as soon as Leo can be tied up safely enough for the operation to be performed.

Another picture shows an orang-outang having his hip put back into shape. The member was broken in an accident, but after the operation this worthy prototype of the animal man was as fit as ever.

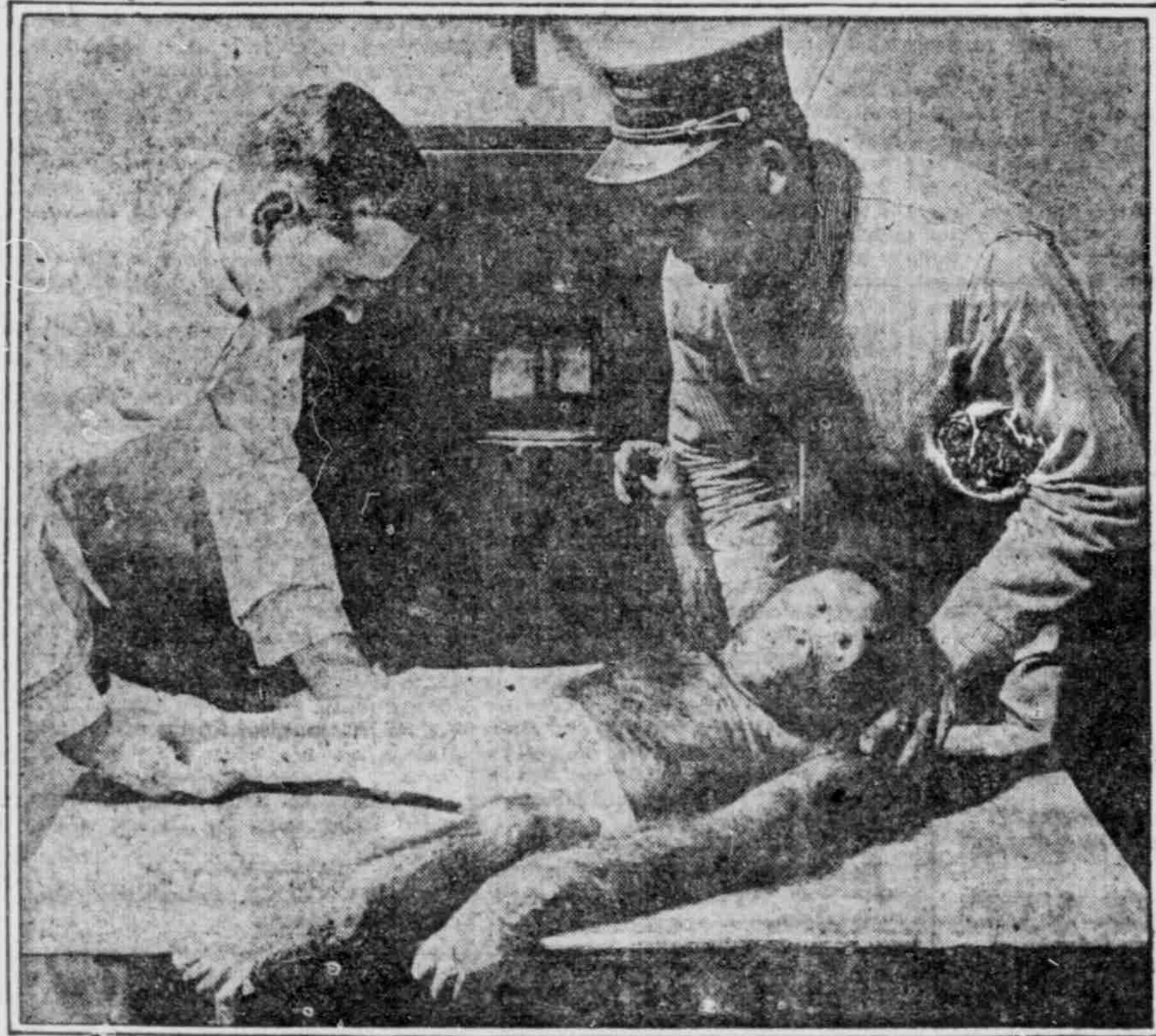
Pneumonia is a disease which plays havoc in most zoos, even among animals which have been brought from rigid northern climates and among those which are submitted to many climatic changes in their native state.

The elephant with his tremendous stature, his thick, callous hide and his predilection for wild

roots and herbs and swampy baths, gets along very satisfactorily in the zoo when he is able to keep away from colds. Sometimes these pachyderms sniffle around like an asthmatic infant. The elephant shown above was just such a disconsolate being when he found himself with a cold. He was cured, as is shown, by being caused to inhale the fumes from a barrel full of hot vinegar.

Another animal which suffers even more from colds than the elephant is the seal. Seals live on the rocky Pacific coast winter and summer. They range from severely cold winters to South American summers, yet they are continually dying of pneumonia in the zoos.

Though the tendency of the animal to resist the attentions of a doctor makes many operations difficult, an ordinary ailment can usually be cured



Resetting the Dislocated Hip of an Acrobatic Orang-Outang at the New York Zoological Park.

if the surgeon is able to make a diagnosis. This is sometimes made almost impossible. A recent occurrence in the New York Zoological Park serves to illustrate this. Two elephants lived in a large stall and were allowed to roam about at will. One day one of the beasts went lame. A week or so afterward she was found on the floor of her stall unable to rise. Everything possible was done to ease the animal's pain. Her keepers even had her raised by a derrick with the idea of removing pressure from the injured hip.

All measures failed, however, and the elephant died. When the skin and muscle around that section of her body which appeared to be injured were removed it was found that the upper leg

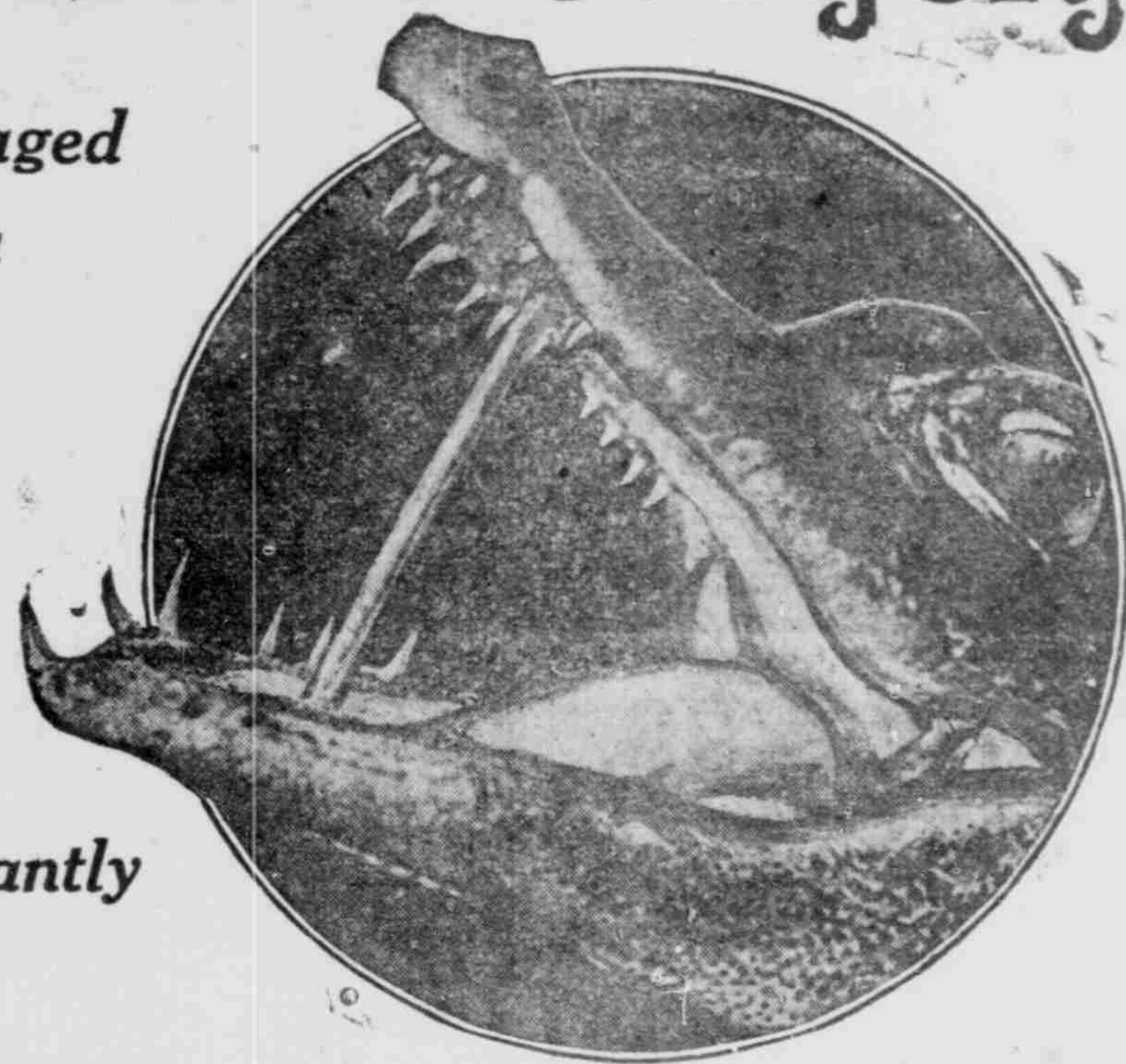
bone had been broken away from the shaft and the leg was useless.

There is also the case of the pigmy elephant, one of the first of its kind to be brought into captivity, whose skin, due to an unnatural climate, cracked all over and became infested. He was put in an elk pen where he might bathe in the mud as much as he desired. For a while this seemed to do him good, but in the end he died.

Wherever possible the presiding surgeon of a zoo will allow nature's own healing processes to work their way, because nature is more successful with an animal than man unless there is some sort of malignant complication.

Bill Snyder, once head of the Central Park

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Before Beginning an Operation on the Throat or Teeth of an Alligator, "Safety First" Rules Recommend a Stout Gag.

equipped laboratories where necessary surgical operations may be performed. Systems of animal hygiene have been developed and assiduous disease prevention methods are observed. Different species require different treatment. Even different members of the same species vary considerably sometimes in their necessities.

There are certain common susceptibilities, however, which are vigorously guarded against. Skin troubles are common among a number of animals. The elephant and rhinoceros are especially liable to afflictions of this kind because of the lack of mud and moisture such as they were used to in their African glades. Lions, monkeys and buffaloes develop a stiffness which grows into paralysis and which is seldom cured.

These are carefully guarded against by preventive measures. The rhinoceros, it has been discovered, may be made practically immune from certain skin diseases by the liberal application of oil. Every prize rhino, therefore, is given oil baths in the summer.

As a matter of fact the well run zoo has developed somewhat the same sort of schedule as a sanatorium for human beings. Each animal guest of the establishment is charted, registered and submitted to periodical inspections. Having paid civilization the tribute of taking up its diseases the beasts of the field and the hill are demanding and getting the refinements of medical attention that civilization affords.

Clipping Off a Lion's Dew Claws Is a Delicate and Exciting Operation for Which the Animal Has to Be Roped and Held.

Zoo, New York, and a wild animal trainer of national reputation, was successful in treating animal ailments though he knew practically nothing about surgery or medicine. When one of his animals would take sick Snyder would usually close the house in which the beast was living, give his afflicted charge one of the usual zoo remedies and let nature do the rest.

Laboratories in the Zoo

The increasing value of animals, however, and the increasingly humane attitude of the public as well as the pronounced tendency of wild animals to develop complications that defy ordinary diagnosis, have done away with anything like hit and miss methods of treatment.

The best zoos in the country have well

Administering Ether to a Coyote Before the Operation.



PHOTOS BY ELWIN R. SANBORN.